

WYCOMBE Wanderers opened their home league programme with a somewhat nervous, but entertaining match against Borehamwood on Tuesday evening.

Fielding four new signings a crowd of just over a thousand had turned up to see how the new men would fit in under new manager Andy Williams.

Wycombe began in a very lively manner with some brisk open football using the flanks well with Paul Birdseye making his usual runs and floating balls across the goal. As early as the tenth minute the Wanderers' new number nine, Steve Long, showed his skill with a fine header from a Stewart Atkins' cross only to see the Borehamwood keeper Waller make a good save.

The three Wycombe front men, Atkins, Long and Scott seemed so eager to impress that at times they became over-anxious in front of goal as the mid-field began to take a grip on the game by constantly switching the attack.

The Borehamwood defence held firm throughout the first 20 minutes with Murphy doing a fine job at the back, despite his

baulky appearance. And Borehamwood almost took the lead after 25 minutes when Watson wriggled free of Davies but delayed his shot too long and Spittle forced him to shoot wide.

Encouraged, Borehamwood made further sorties into the Wycombe area with Ragan looking dangerous at times. In fact he should have been presented with a chance to score when a mix-up between the Wycombe full backs let Batten in with a free run at goal, Ragan supported him well and made space for a certain goal but the pass from Batten was too long and again Spittle dashed to the rescue.

OLD FIRM

It was during this period that Wycombe looked a little nervous, but thanks to the old firm of Phillips and Mead, Wycombe steadied at the back and the half ended with Holifield working an opening on the right and sending the ball across the face of the goal only to see three players lunge at the ball and miss it. The hasty clearance went to Terry Scott, whose first-time left foot shot screamed past the post.

The second half began with Wycombe pushing forward and

using the wings well. After a period of exciting pressure came one of the best moves. Phillips slipped a quick ball to Holifield, who scooped it into the path of Dave Allanson. His left foot shot had keeper Waller juggling in goal to hold it.

This brought the crowd to life and the Borehamwood side as well for they countered by playing a series of early balls over the top of the Wycombe defence with Ragan going close with a good header.

But Wycombe stuck to their task well and after some good work by Atkins, who had a great run finish just wide of the post, and another solo effort hit the side netting, the goal arrived.

Just 21 minutes into the half the ball went out to Terry Scott on the right. His superb cross found Steve Long, who, flanked by two defenders, rose to place a very firm header wide of Waller.

DESPERATE

Having got the goal they so deserved, Wycombe became frightened of losing and allowed Borehamwood too much of the ball. Had luck gone their way the visitors might well have shared the points.

New manager Andy Williams summed it up: "We were desperate to win that at the end all broke down. Some of the players are aware that goals did not come too often last season and they are anxious to prove themselves."

"I am now looking forward to our home match with Hendon on Saturday and hope we can build on tonight's performance."

Once the newcomers have adjusted themselves to the pace of the game and settle into the side Wycombe can be hopeful of some good things this season.

The four new signings did good things, Atkins will be a crowd-pleaser with his exciting runs at goal, Scott can cross the ball to any point in the area and will no doubt play a part upfront. Both Long and Allanson certainly have to adjust to the pace, but Long showed enough of his skill in the air to impress and Allanson will be favourite if he continues to shoot in the manner he did in this match.

Wycombe: Spittle, Birdseye, Davies, Mead, Phillips, Allanson, Atkins, Holifield, Long, Kennedy, Scott, sub Harris (used for Scott 77 minutes).

Borehamwood: Waller, Tyler, Hull, Ragan, Sneddon, Murphy, Lawrence, Mulkern, Watson, Batten, O'Donoghue, sub Skingle (used for Sneddon 88 mins).

ON Saturday, Wycombe Wanderers entertain Hendon at Loakes Park (k.o. 3 pm). With Hendon collecting a point against Enfield on Tuesday evening while Wycombe grabbed the points from Borehamwood the encounter should be interesting.

Hendon have always provided good opposition in the past and no doubt will do so again on Saturday.

Wycombe will be looking to build on their result of Tuesday evening, especially if Stewart Atkins, Steve Long and Terry Scott approach this match with the attitude they showed against Borehamwood.

Wycombe Wanderers..... 5
Hendon..... 0

Loakes Park has seldom been a happy hunting ground for Hendon, and so it proved on Saturday when they perished 5-0 against Wycombe Wanderers.

SAT 26/8/78

Though fielding the same side that had performed so well against mighty Enfield only five days earlier, Hendon were unable to adjust to the slanting pitch — though they were just about the equal of Wycombe in the first half.

Stewart Atkins, a newcomer from Chesham, was Wycombe's hat-trick star. He scored his first goal just before the interval, snapping up a flick-on from Howard Kennedy to drive the ball home from the edge of the area.

Hendon came back strongly for a while in the second half, with George Brooks hitting the woodwork following a Ray O'Callaghan corner.

But they were soon under pressure, and in the 56th minute an inswinging corner from the right by Micky Holifield appeared to swerve straight into the Hendon net,

though former Hendon central defender Alan Phillips claimed the ball clipped his head.

The third goal, after 57 minutes, was an amazing effort. A long clearance by John Maskell was chipped on by Atkins and the ball bounced over Hendon goalkeeper Alan Thomas, who was caught well off his line. Atkins nipped around Thomas and slipped the ball into an empty net.

Atkins completed his hat-trick in the 69th minute, following a cross by Holifield — but Hendon claimed Atkins had handled.

Hendon's tale of woe was completed when Wycombe rounded off the scoring just before the end with a simple goal. Terry Scott broke away down the right before crossing to the far post for the unmarked Steve Long to head home.